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It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this man's appointment

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by

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IN a surprise move, President Johnson has appointed one of his Texan friends to a post of supreme importance to Western defence.

He is 59-year-old William "Red" Raborn, a rumbustious, retired admiral who was formerly in command of the Polaris missile project.

Responsible

AS the new chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, which spends at least \$350 million a year, he is now largely responsible for countering the Communists in the cold war and for minimising the risk of a hot war.

Does it make sense to put a missile expert, who is an ex-admiral with no Intelligence experience, in charge of a huge network of civilian spies and agents operating from Venezuela to Vietnam?

In Raborn's case it makes excellent sense, not only because of his outstanding qualities of leadership but because of the electronic advances which

tioning both the gathering and evaluation of foreign Intelligence.

The \$15 million C.I.A. headquarters, a white H-shaped building on the Potomac River outside Washington, is still fed by written reports from perhaps 50,000 agents abroad using their eyes and ears.

But infinitely more important is the welter of information pouring in from spy-in-the-sky satellites photographing every square mile behind the Iron Curtain, from monitored microphones hidden in embassies, from intercepted diplomatic signals and from teletypewriters linked with tapped telephones.

Only by using electronic computers can all the information be stored, recalled and analysed in time to have any value to the current situation.

And time has never been so important in Intelligence in the H-bomb missile age when a surprise attack might be decisive.

Experience

THERE is no man with richer experience than Raborn at using computers to cut delays, identify weaknesses, and make a

people believed that the Polaris project could be completed at all because of its complexity.

But by applying computers to the management of information pouring in from 5,000 scientists and 10,000 contractors Raborn had the astonishing missile at sea in four years.

But even with electronic help the missile would have been late if the stocky admiral with the thinning hair and ginger eyebrows had not been able to generate terrific enthusiasm throughout the entire team.

There is certainly scope for improvement at C.I.A.

When Allen Dulles was chief—up to four years ago—it dangerously overestimated the date of the first Russian atom bomb and the first Sputnik, created the "missile gap" scare by miscalculating Soviet rocket capacity, and backed the wrong man in Laos.

Raborn has another attribute which impressed me when he briefed me on Polaris in its more secret days. He is a clear speaker and can explain difficult issues in simple terms—a quality not always found in technical men or admirals.

It will be his job to brief the president every morning on the progress of the

especially on the state of readiness of Russia's nuclear weapons.

Decisions

HE will have to produce special reports on subjects ranging from the date of the next Chinese atom bomb to the state of the "defector programme" for inducing Communist agents to desert to the West.

Profound presidential decisions will depend on the skill with which C.I.A. evaluates the information and the clarity with which its chief transmits it.

Previous C.I.A. chiefs had a dangerous degree of independence. It was Dulles who launched the disastrous Bay of Pigs attempt to defeat Castro in Cuba. He was also responsible for the U2 spy-plane incident which wrecked the Summit talks in 1960.

The odds are that through his friendship with the president, Raborn will be much less aloof and under closer political control.

Now that we are being made increasingly dependent on the U.S. for defence I find this change of Intelligence leadership especially reassuring.

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